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thermoplastic binder fused to both of said particulate polymer liquid absorbent and said first surface.

REMARKS

Applicants' note with appreciation the indication during the telephone conference held with their attorney, Paul D. Greeley, that the Examiner has indicated that claims 16, 17, 20-23, and 44-48 are in condition for allowance.

Applicants' also note that the Examiner has maintained her rejection of claims 18, 19, 24 and 25 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Korpman (U.S. Patent No. 5,462,538). In this regard, applicants respectfully point out that the Examiner has incorrectly interpreted the discussion in Korpman regarding col. 10, lines 3-7. Contrary to the statement by the Examiner that "Korpman clearly teaches that an absorbent powder is immobilized onto a facing material (10) before the facing material is coated with the pressure sensitive adhesive", that portion of Korpman actually states that the absorbent powder is immobilized on a pressure-sensitive adhesive coated facing material 10 before the side of the facing material coated with the pressure-sensitive adhesive is contacted with an absorbent core. Therefore, Korpman does not describe or subject immobilizing the absorbent powder on the facing followed by coating with pressure-sensitive adhesive. Rather, Korpman teaches the opposite of coating the absorbent core with a pressure-sensitive adhesive followed by coating with the absorbent powder.

The applicants have amended claims 18 and 24 to clearly define that which they consider their invention, i.e., a first substrate web having a first surface upon which is deposited a mixture of particulate carbon and particles of a thermoplastic binder fused to both of the particulate carbon and first surface. This clearly distinguishes the claims of

the present invention over the two distinct layers, i.e., a pressure-sensitive adhesive layer and an absorbent powder disclosed in Korpman. Moreover, the Examiner has indicated that the pressure-sensitive adhesive layer may also include a filler such as carbon black. In this regard, applicants respectfully point out that carbon black is nothing more than a pigment used to provide color, whereas the particulate carbon recited in claim 18 is an active particulate, such as activate carbon, not an inert such as carbon black.

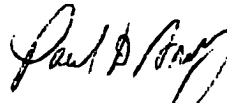
Furthermore, Korpman neither describes nor suggests the addition of a second web substrate adjacent to the fused particulates as recited in claims 19 and 25.

In view of the amendments to claims 18 and 24, applicants respectfully submit that the rejection under 35 USC §102(b) is now moot and should be withdrawn. Furthermore, applicants submit that the examiner has provided no motivation which would make one skilled in the art provide such a mixture of particulate carbon and particles of a thermoplastic binder, whereby the thermoplastic binder is fused to both of particulate carbon and first surface. Therefore, the claims as currently amended are clearly patentable over the references of record.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks applicant(s) respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of all the claims presently in the application.

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Respectfully submitted,



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